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## **Service to Begin Evaluation of American Habitat Center's Proposed Stakeholder Conservation Strategy for the Lesser Prairie-Chicken**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced its intent to prepare a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the impacts of, and alternatives to, the proposed Stakeholder Conservation Strategy for the Lesser Prairie-Chicken developed by the American Habitat Center (AHC). AHC's application includes a draft Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) that will address the take of the lesser prairie-chicken (LPC) in the event that the species is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. This announcement begins a 30-day public comment period.

The AHC includes a diverse group of stakeholders representing energy, agricultural and conservation industries and organizations across the six states of Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska. AHC's draft HCP would cover construction, operation and maintenance associated with multiple commercial energy facilities and agricultural activities and conservation management activities that may affect the lesser prairie-chicken within portions of the six States of Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska. The Service's draft Environmental Impact Statement will consider the proposed issuance of an Incidental Take Permit, supported by an HCP; no action and a reasonable range of other alternatives.

Public scoping meetings will be held at three locations within the six state proposed permit area. Exact meeting locations and times will be noticed in local newspapers and at the Service's Southwest Office website, <http://www.fws.gov/southwest> at least 2 weeks prior to each event.

For more information on these proposals or how to comment see the *Federal Register* notice at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/>, or contact Allison Arnold, Austin Ecological Services Field Office, 10711 Burnett Road, Suite 200, Austin, TX 78758-4460; telephone 512/490-0057; fax 512/490-0974; or email [allison\\_arnold@fws.gov](mailto:allison_arnold@fws.gov).

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